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EDITOR'S TABLE.

—THE late meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science was an occasion of instruction and pleasure to all concerned. The hospitality of the citizens of the beautiful city of Springfield and the generally delightful weather, contributed much to the comfort of the visitors. The excursions to points less remote than usual, were, on this account, more enjoyable. The leading club of the place gave a unique entertainment, furnished by the talent of the members.

The only regrettable feature was the small attendance, less than four hundred members having been present. As the locality was accessible to the most populous region of the country, this absence of many of our best-known cultivators of science excited comment. Such a considerable number of our best zoologists remained away from the meeting that the section of zoology was reduced to a fragment of what it should have been. A considerable number of the geologists failed to attend most of the sessions of their section.

There are two principal causes for this falling off in the attendance, which has been characteristic of several recent meetings. One of the principal causes is lack of patriotism and public spirit on the part of a good many of the absentee members. The Association affords to the scientific men of the country the opportunity to present their work to the public, and thus to excite its interest. The Association has a missionary service to which no cultivator of science should be insensible. It is not only a stimulant to education to men of all classes, but it offers matter of thought and occupation to the well-to-do, who are sometimes at a loss for occupation for both time and money. And it should appeal to the selfish interests of the cultivators of science as well, for the Association must influence men of means in suggesting directions for the exercise of their liberality.

The other reason for the small attendance of some of the sections is the absorption of interest in special societies which meet immediately before the Association convenes. It is well for the societies to meet at the same time and place as the Association, but they should be careful not to appropriate too much of its vitality. Due consideration of the importance of the Association to science and to the country, should influence them in this matter, and it is to be supposed that the experience of the last few years is all that is necessary to impress this view on the mind of their members with reference to the future.

In order to remove some special inducements to absenteeism which were presented by the Springfield meeting, the Association adopted two important resolutions. First, that meetings should begin on Monday, so that they should not be interrupted by a Sunday; and, second, that excursions should not be undertaken until after the close of the meeting. These arrangements will have an excellent effect in concentrating both the work and the attendance.

—THE Zoological Section passed some important resolutions with reference to the proposed bibliographical bureau and its work. It endorsed the plan introduced by Mr. H. H. Field, for the establishment of such a bureau in Switzerland. It is proposed that this bureau shall issue frequent bibliographical records of Zoölogical papers as they appear; and it is hoped that it will do the same for botanical literature. For its support the Association appropriated the sum of \$250.00, to be added to the various sums already subscribed in Europe.

Mr. Field offered a resolution that the bureau undertake to fix the date of publication of all printed matter presented to it. This resolution was adopted by the Section. He also proposed that the date of

publication be regarded as the date of distribution. The Section did not concur in this view. Consultation with leading publishing zoologists present, as well as with botanists, disclosed an almost unanimous sentiment in favor of regarding the date of completed printing, as the only available date of publication. Resolutions expressing this opinion were framed and passed Section F unanimously, and copies were sent to Mr. Field for presentation before the British Association at Ipswich, and the Zoological Congress at Leyden, Holland.

—OFFICIALISM is becoming more conspicuous among American office holders than was formerly the case. Years ago, our officials were conspicuous for their politeness to the public, and general disposition to forward their interests. More recently many of the customs collectors have distinguished themselves for their extreme interpretations of the provisions of the tariff laws, so as to render themselves obnoxious, and the country absurd. Still more recently the Post-Office Department developed an exaggerated officialism in refusing to transmit various articles over its routes. Naturalists have had especial difficulties in the matter of mailing specimens. Both zoologists and botanists have been met with refusals to allow the sending of their specimens, which have only been withdrawn after tedious negotiations. No sooner is this point gained than some new and superserviceable postmaster raises fresh difficulties, and the same process has to be repeated. The only permanent remedy is the enactment and enforcement of compulsory education laws, so that all our citizens may learn that the prosecution of the natural sciences is beneficial to the public, and that their cultivators are an important part of the community.

—AMONG the various acts hostile to science which have rendered the present administration notorious, few will excite deeper regret than the suspension of the journal formerly issued by the Agricultural Department under the name of *Insect Life*. As a record of the discovery in the greatest of all zoological fields, it has no equal in the world, as its value was assured by the ability of its editors, first, Mr. C. V. Riley, and more recently Mr. L. O. Howard. The policy of the present administration, as announced by the present Secretary of Agriculture, to limit the functions of government to those which are most rudimental, warrants the retort, actually made by one of his scientific experts to him, that the Department itself should then be abolished. The first Secretary, the Hon. Jeremiah Rusk, declared that he was placed at the tail of the administration on order to "keep the flies off of it." The present Secretary seems inclined to let the "flies" remain, not only on the administration, but on the entire country.

—IN the death of the U. S. Commissioner of Fisheries the Hon. Marshall MacDonald, the country loses a very efficient officer. It is to be expected that an equally competent man shall succeed him.

—WE must again remind our contributors that the most certain way of getting separate copies of their papers is to communicate with the publishers directly; and the most direct method of doing this is to write their wishes on the copy which goes to the printer.

RECENT LITERATURE.

Rambles in Alpine Valleys.¹—In this little book Mr. Tutt gives the impressions of a naturalist while exploring the valleys on the Italian side of the Mont Blanc range. Especial attention is given to the insect life, and in describing their habits and habitats, many problems are suggested for discussion. These are touched upon lightly, but never slightly, the object of the author, as stated in his preface, being to explain simply and clearly, without going deeply into scientific technicalities, the scientific bearings of some of the facts that came under his notice during a holiday spent in that region. The book is very pleasantly written and well repays perusal by the lover of nature and of scenery. Among naturalists it appeals especially to entomologists.

Five plates gives some idea of the scenery in the valleys visited.

Lead and Zinc Deposits of Missouri.²—This report is published in two volumes of nearly 400 pages each, the subject being treated under three heads. Part I is a general discussion of the history, compounds, modes of occurrence, distribution and industry of lead and zinc throughout the world. Part II deals with the lead and zinc in Missouri. Part III is a systematic and detailed description of the important developments and occurrences of lead and zinc ores in the state of Missouri. Accompanying the report are two papers having a bearing upon the subject: A study of the Cherts of Missouri, by E. O.

¹ *Rambles in Alpine Valleys.* By J. W. Tutt. London, Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., 1895.

² *Missouri Geological Survey Vols. VI and VII. Report upon the Lead and Zinc Deposits.* By Arthur Winslow, assisted by J. D. Robertson. Jefferson City, 1894.